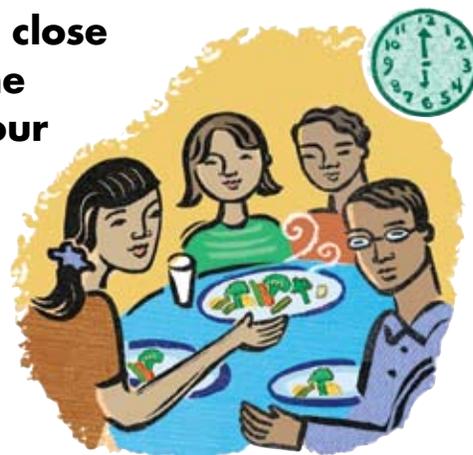


Enjoying The Family Meal

Family meals are important. You create close bonds and lifelong memories around the family table. Family meals can teach your child about healthful eating. You just need to be a good role model. When you try new foods your child may be more adventurous with food, too.

Try these easy ways to make family meals a pleasant part of your family routine.



- **Set a regular family mealtime.** Regular mealtimes give your child a better chance to eat a variety of foods to get the right amount to grow, stay healthy, and keep a healthy weight.
- **Make it simple, make it quick!** Spend less time in the kitchen and more time at the family table. Simple meals, even cold sandwiches, taste as good as meals that take more work. You can make any meal special if you all feel relaxed and if mealtime is filled with caring and laughter. Simplify – to take care of you, too!
- **Show that family meals are important.** During mealtime, turn off the TV. Find another way to see favorite shows. Let the answering machine take your phone calls, too. Have your family make calls before or after the meal hour. Show that same respect for other families when you make phone calls.
- **Eat around a table.** It's easier to talk and listen to your family when you face each other. Eating side-by-side at the kitchen counter takes away eye contact.
- **Enjoy meal talk.** Make easy conversations – no nagging or complaining. Talk so everyone can be a “star” at mealtime. Don't take over. Your child will listen and learn by feeling included.
- **Be realistic about mealtime.** Try to sit down together. Keep meals from lasting too long. If kids get fussy, your family meal won't be fun. Wait until everyone is done to be excused.



Mealtime: Who Decides What?

Parent Decides

- When to offer food
 - Regular meals & snacks
- What foods to serve
 - Healthy choices
- Where to serve food
 - Preferably at a table
 - Not in front of a TV or in the bedroom

Child Decides

- Whether or not to eat
 - Children will eat when hungry
- Which foods to eat
 - Choice of healthy foods
- How much to eat
 - Children will stop eating when they are full

